- displaying information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected, including the graphic layout of the operation panel of said one image forming apparatus selected, from among said information items stored in said storing step; and

‾ entering requirements corresponding to said information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus and an image forming execution instruction.

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REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-45 are pending in this application. Claims 34-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,625,757 to Kageyama et al. (herein "Kageyama"). Claims 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. patent 5,768,516 to Sugishima. Claims 18-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Kageyama in view of U.S. patent 5,727,135 to Webb et al. (herein "Webb"). Claims 18, 20, 21, 26, 28, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Webb. Claims 34, 38, 41, and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of U.S. patent 5,991,846 to Ooki. Claims 19 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Webb as applied to Claims 18 and 25, and further in view of Ooki. Claims 22-25 and 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sugishima in view of Webb.

Addressing each of the above-noted rejections, each of those rejections is traversed by the present response.

It is initially noted that each of independent Claims 34, 37, 40, and 43 is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Specifically, those claims now clarify that the "storing means", "server", or "storing" operation include "storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the network". In such ways, each of independent Claims 34, 37, 40, and 43 recites a similar feature as added to independent Claims 18 and 26 in the previously filed amendment.

The current rejections recognize that the primary references to <u>Kageyama</u> and <u>Sugishima</u> do not disclose storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the computer network.[2]

To overcome the recognized deficiencies in both <u>Kageyama</u> and <u>Sugishima</u> the outstanding Office Action cites the teachings in <u>Webb</u>. However, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding rejection misconstrues the teachings in <u>Webb</u> as <u>Webb</u> does not teach or suggest any type of server or storing device for *storing* a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the network. Instead, <u>Webb</u> discloses an operation in which a bidirectional communication is established between a host and a printer to provide the host with a replica of an operation panel of the printer. That is, <u>Webb</u> does not disclose *storing* in a centralized server or storing device graphic layout of an operation panel of *all of the image forming apparatuses* connected to a network, but instead discloses that a bidirectional communication can be established to transmit information of a display of an image forming apparatus.

<u>Webb</u> specifically states, as one example:

> The host 11 is provided with a software utility program which, in cooperation with the controller of printer 16 to be described, facilitates

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[2]Office Action of November 19, 2002, page 5, lines 13-15 of preparagraph numbered 7, and page 7, lines 12-14.

bidirectional communication between host 11 and printer 16 in order to provide a user of host 11 with access to a replica 35' of operator panel 35.[3]

In supporting the outstanding rejection the outstanding Office Action states:

Webb discloses a print system that allows a user to access a functional replica of the operation panel of a printer available to a host (column 3, lines 56-60).[4]

The above-noted statement in the Office Action correctly indicates the teachings in

Webb. However, the claims require more than merely allowing access to a functional replica

of an operation panel. The claims require *storing* in a server or a storing device a graphic

layout of *an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses* connected

to the network. Such features distinguish over the teachings in Webb.

In such ways, Webb cannot overcome the recognized deficiencies in Kageyama and

Sugishima.

Thereby, the outstanding rejections are traversed as Webb does not disclose the

features relied upon for the rejections. Thus, each of the currently pending claims is believed

to be allowable over the prior art of record.

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[3]Webb at column 6, lines 56-60. (Emphasis added).

[4]Office Action of November 29, 2002, page 7, lines 15-16.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 34, 37, 40, and 43 as follows:

--34. (Amended) A server connected to a network having a client computer and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, comprising:

storing means for storing information items associated with image forming inherent to each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, including storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the network;

receiving means for receiving requirements for image forming from said client computer;

searching means for performing a search for image forming apparatuses satisfying said requirements from among said plurality of image forming apparatuses based on said information items associated with image forming inherent to each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and reporting a result of said search to said client computer;

means for receiving a user selection from said client computer for selecting one image forming apparatus based on said result; and

means for transmitting, to said client computer, information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected, including the graphic layout of the operation panel of said one image forming apparatus selected, receiving from said client computer user instructions corresponding to said information items associated

with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected, and sending an image forming execution instruction to said one selected image forming apparatus.

37. (Amended) A client computer connected to a network having a plurality of image forming apparatuses and a server that stores information items associated with image forming inherent to each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, including storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the network, comprising:

transmitting means for transmitting requirements for image forming to said server;

receiving means for receiving a result of a search performed by said server, said search searching for image forming apparatuses satisfying said requirements from among said plurality of image forming apparatuses based on said information items associated with image forming to each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses;

means for displaying said result of said search performed by said server;

means for entering a user selection for selecting one image forming apparatus to send an image forming execution instruction from among said image forming apparatuses satisfying said requirements according to said result of said search; and

means for receiving, from said server, information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected, including the graphic layout of the operation panel of said one image forming apparatus selected, entering user instructions corresponding to said one selected image forming apparatus, and sending an image forming execution instruction to said server.

40. (Amended) A network system comprising:

a client computer generating an image forming execution instruction and requirements for image forming;

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a plurality of image forming apparatuses; and

a server configured to perform a search for searching one image forming apparatus from among said plurality of image forming apparatuses in accordance with said requirements,

wherein said server includes:

means for storing information items associated with image forming inherent to each of said plurality of image forming apparatuses, including storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;

means for reporting a result of said search; and

means for transmitting information items associated with image forming inherent to one image forming apparatus that is selected from among said image forming apparatuses according to said result of said search by a user through said client computer,

wherein said client computer includes:

means for displaying said result of said search;

means for entering a user selection for selecting one image forming apparatus from among said image forming apparatuses according to said result of said search;

means for receiving information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected by said user selection, including the graphic layout of the operation panel of said one image forming apparatus selected; and

means for entering an image forming execution instruction and requirements for image forming corresponding to said information items associated with image forming inherent to said one selected image forming apparatus.

43. (Amended) A method of controlling a network image forming, comprising the steps of:

storing information items associated with image forming inherent to each of a plurality of image forming apparatuses, including storing a graphic layout of an operation panel of all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to a network;

- receiving requirements for image forming from a client computer;

searching at least one image forming apparatus satisfying said requirements for image forming;

displaying a result of said searching step;

- entering a user selection for selecting one image forming apparatus from among said at least one image forming apparatus;

displaying information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus selected, including the graphic layout of the operation panel of said one image forming apparatus selected, from among said information items stored in said storing step; and

entering requirements corresponding to said information items associated with image forming inherent to said one image forming apparatus and an image forming execution instruction.--